

Today's News - Thursday, March 19, 2015

EDITOR'S NOTE: Tomorrow is this week's "floating" no-newsletter day (forecast: 3-6 inches of snow...oh joy) - we'll be back Monday, March 23.

- Fox on the sad state of today's broken planning system in the U.S., where "opposition politics rule and the answer is usually 'no.' Vocal minorities have hijacked the system and rendered impossible a reasonable and rational debate on development."
- We're not alone: Butler digs deep into how Canada's planned Memorial to Victims of Communism "has followed a winding and often secretive path en route to becoming the capital's most contentious new landmark - and has provoked strong opposition to its size, design and prime location."
- Grabar explains how American cities (a.k.a. tax-payers) can stop being screwed by "sporting oligarchs" wasting millions of our dollars on new sports complexes: "It's been clear for decades that new stadiums don't bring the business they promise, let alone enough economic activity to justify the investment."
- Litt reports that Cleveland's new "iconic" lakefront pedestrian bridge won't be finished in time for the 2016 Republican National Convention - but that's not such a bad thing: "meeting the original deadline would have required changing the design in ways that would have compromised its aesthetic integrity."
- Capps tips us off on how London's Nine Elms "fancy bridge contest got punked" by OMA's entry: it "was never a serious proposal - it was a protest. OMA's design gets it right: This is no way to build bridges."
- Copenhagen is getting a "new 'designer' mosque" by Henning Larsen that will bring "a new architectonic pearl" to one of the city's "slightly forgotten districts."
- Places launches its new Future Archive series of online postings of important 20th-century writings on design with a 1968 doozy by the "once formidable, now forgotten" Sibyl Moholy-Nagy, introduced by Stratigakos (Breuer lovers: beware - it's a bruiser - and a must-read!).
- ICAA announces the winners of the 2015 Arthur Ross Awards for Excellence in the Classical Tradition.
- Eye-fuls of the fantastical 2015 Fairy Tales Competition winners.
- Call for entries: Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation Design Competition + 2015 Fuller Challenge (deadline looms!).
- Weekend diversions:
- Goldmann is riveted by "Ways to Modernism: Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos, and Their Impact" at the MAK in Vienna: "it is hard to leave without feeling that the times we live in are somewhat impoverished."
- Q&A with curator Herz re: who/what/why is on view in "Architecture of Independence - African Modernism" at the Vitra Design, and "how the continent's bracingly modern buildings reflected notions of liberation and autonomy."
- Heathcote is totally taken by two Brodsky shows in London: His "surreal architecture seemed unrealizable, yet in the 2000s he began building" (never mind the "remarkable density and intensity" of his drawings).
- Edelson advises "those seeking a substantive discussion" about the Obama library "and not the constant prattle around it, look no further" than "Presidential Libraries: Designing a Legacy" at the Chicago Architecture Foundation.
- Bentley visits "Treatise: Why Write Alone" at the Graham Foundation in Chicago: "a bright and unusual show more playful than provocative, but a strong statement nonetheless. No solitary designer could dream up the wild collection of work" (great pix!).
- "A Home for Art: Edward Larrabee Barnes and the KMA" celebrates the 25th anniversary of the Katonah Museum of Art - and its architect.
- Dovey delves into "Tactical Urbanism" by "two of the buzz-term's leading advocates" Lydon and Garcia: "It's about cheap, quick models that can be modeled, debated and even discarded, with community involvement the whole way."
- Newman gives (mostly) thumbs-up to Sharoff's "evocative text" and Zbaren's "crisp, luminous photography" in "Last is More: Mies, IBM, and the Transformation of Chicago."
- Bernstein basks in Borromini in "a rarity: a fictional film about real architecture - it has no surprises, except how good 350-year-old buildings look on 21st-century screens."

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Broken Planning: How Opponents Hijacked the Planning Process: ...opposition politics rule and the answer is usually "no.": Vital projects...are victims of a process that places the desires of the few over the needs of the many. Vocal minorities have hijacked the system and rendered impossible a reasonable and rational debate on development. By Patrick Fox - PLANetizen

A monumental controversy: History of the Memorial to Victims of Communism: ...has followed a winding and often secretive path en route to becoming the capital's most contentious new landmark. Immersed in politics from birth...and has provoked strong opposition to its size, design and prime location...the fact that the memorial has become "a hated thing" for some people is painful. By Don Butler -- ABSTRAKT Studio Architecture [image]- Ottawa Citizen (Canada)

How to Stop the Stadium Wars: Cities and suburbs compete for the privilege of wasting millions on new sports complexes. Obama has an idea to end the madness: ...end tax-free government bonds for professional sports facilities...Extortion at the hands of our sporting oligarchs is, of course, a popular source of outrage...It's been clear for decades that new stadiums don't bring the business they promise, let alone enough economic activity to justify the investment. It's a ruse, but it works. By Henry Grabar - Slate

City, county and Group Plan Commission reschedule construction of iconic lakefront bridge to 2017: ...won't be finished in time for the 2016 Republican National Convention...meeting the original deadline would have required changing the bridge design in ways that would have compromised its aesthetic integrity...still attempting to negotiate a way to complete the project on time and on budget - with the desired design. By Steven Litt -- Miguel Rosales - Cleveland Plain Dealer

How London's Latest Fancy Bridge Contest Got Punked: A rejected design by OMA was never a serious proposal - it was a protest: ...Reinier de Graaf copped to the spoof...Kind of...it seems that OMA aims for its proposal to be taken seriously...just not necessarily by the bridge-project jury...OMA's design gets it right: This is no way to build bridges. By Kriston Capps [images]- CityLab (formerly The Atlantic Cities)

Copenhagen to get new 'designer' mosque: "the mosque will become more accessible to the city, while one of Copenhagen's slightly forgotten districts receives a new architectonic pearl" -- Henning Larsen Architects [image]- The Copenhagen Post (Denmark)

Future Archive: "Hitler's Revenge": Once formidable, now forgotten, the mid 20th-century critic Sibyl Moholy-Nagy merits new attention: ...1968 critique...responded to what she (and others) viewed as a ludicrous proposal by Marcel Breuer to erect a skyscraper atop Grand Central Terminal...reminds us that the arriving modernists met not only with opposition from the American public, but also were divided internally with regard to their own legacy and mission. Introduction by Despina Stratigakos - Places Journal

ICAA Announces Winners of the 2015 Arthur Ross Awards for Excellence in the Classical Tradition -- ADAM Architecture; Moule & Polyzoïdes; Elizabeth White and Samuel G. White; Léon Krier - Institute of Classical Architecture & Art (ICAA)

Winners of the 2015 Fairy Tales Competition: ...second ideas contest that challenges participants to produce

inspired architectural projects accompanied by fictional stories. With over 1,200 participants from 65 countries... -- Zigeng Wang; Alexander Culler/Danny Travis; Samantha Lee/Zhan Wang; Pauline Marcombe/Helene Marcombe/Jay Robinson [images] - Blank Space

Call for entries: Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation Design Competition: an artistically exceptional design concept for a permanent commemorative work in Washington, DC. to reflect the American principles embodied by the Peace Corps service; Stage I deadline: June 12- Peace Corps Commemorative Foundation (PCCF)

Call for entries (deadline reminder!): 2015 Fuller Challenge: innovative solutions to some of humanity's most pressing problems; \$100,000 prize to support the development and implementation of one outstanding strategy; deadline: March 31 - Buckminster Fuller Institute

"Ways to Modernism: Josef Hoffmann, Adolf Loos, and Their Impact": ...a riveting new exhibit at the Austrian Museum of Applied Arts (MAK)...One walks out more impressed by Loos's intellectual acumen, but more immediately, impulsively drawn to the unimpeachable beauty of Hoffmann's stunning designs...it is hard to leave without feeling that the times we live in are somewhat impoverished. By A.J. Goldmann [images] - Wall Street Journal

Q&A: Curator Manuel Herz on Africa's "Grandiose" Modern Architecture: The organizer of "Architecture of Independence—African Modernism" discusses how the continent's bracingly modern buildings reflected notions of liberation and autonomy. -- Vitra Design Museum; Iwan Baan; Fry, Drew and Partners; N'Gom; Henri Chomette; Karl Henrik Nostvik; Jean Francois Lamoureux/Jean-Louis Marin; Henri Chomette/Roland Depret [images] - Metropolis Magazine

Alexander Brodsky builds the impossible: ...conceiving projects as fairy tales - and then making them real: [His] surreal architecture seemed unrealisable, yet in the 2000s he began building..."When I see a new building the first thing I think about is what has been lost." It's a curious position for an architect but it also helps explain the remarkable density and intensity in the drawings as an embodiment of loss and memory and fears for a latent future. "Potential Architecture" at Ambika P3; "Brodsky and Utkin Portfolio" at Tate Modern. By Edwin Heathcote -- Ilya Utkin [images] - Financial Times (UK)

"Presidential Libraries: Designing A Legacy": ...for those seeking a substantive discussion of the library itself, and not the constant prattle around it, look no further...two winners and three honorable mentions from the Chicago Architecture Club 2014 Chicago Prize competition...at the Chicago Architecture Foundation. By Zachary Edelson [images] - Architectural Record

Individuals, All Together: Chris Bentley visits Jimenez Lai's "Treatise: Why Write Alone" at the Graham Foundation: ...a bright and unusual show more playful than provocative, but a strong statement nonetheless...No solitary designer could dream up the wild collection of work displayed here, much less the strange and sometimes wonderful relationships that result between them. -- Bittertang;; Bureau Spectacular; CAMES/gibson; Design With Company; FAKE Industries; First Office; Pieterjan Gincels; is-office; Andrew Kovacs; Alex Maymind; Norman Kelley; Point Supreme Architects; SOFTlab; Young & Ayata [images] - The Architect's Newspaper

Edward Larrabee Barnes Honored in 25th Anniversary Katonah Museum of Art Exhibition: "A Home for Art: Edward Larrabee Barnes and the KMA" ...will celebrate the silver anniversary of its landmark building by Barnes...presents an overview of Barnes' career and seminal role in modern architecture... - The Journal News

"Tactical Urbanism: Short-Term Action for Long-Term Change" Signals the Way to Equitable, Funded City Planning: What if city planning were quicker, cheaper and allowed to fail? It's about cheap, quick models that can be modeled, debated and even discarded, with community involvement the whole way, rather than explained with legalese. It's that old creative writing mantra: Show, don't tell...by two of the buzz-term's leading advocates, Mike Lydon and Anthony Garcia. By Rachel Dovey - Next City (formerly Next American City)

Learning More from Mies: "Last is More: Mies, IBM, and the Transformation of Chicago" illustrates the parallel trajectories of these two giants of the last century through Robert Sharoff's evocative text and William Zbaren's crisp, luminous photography...serve not only as author and photographer, but also as archivists, historians, and interviewers. By Brian Newman [images] - The Architect's Newspaper

"La Sapienza": A new film directed by Eugène Green lingers on architecture: ...follows a disillusioned French architect and student...a rarity: a fictional film about real architecture...on a trip to Rome to visit Borromini's masterpieces...has no surprises, except how good 350-year-old buildings...look on 21st century screens. By Fred A. Bernstein - Architectural Record



-- The Camera: Yiorgis Yerolymbos: ...a leading figure in architectural photography in Greece.
-- Bookshelf: "Double Dutch: Dutch Architecture since 1985" by Bernard Hulsman; "The Future of Architecture in 100 Buildings" by Marc Kushner; "Copy Paste: Bad Ass Copy Guide" by Winy Maas; "The Inevitable Specificity of Cities" by ETH Studio Basel; "Women, Modernity, and Landscape Architecture" by Sonja Dümpelmann, John Beardsley

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